

Colorado Agricultural Commission Representation



Background

The Colorado Agricultural Commission plays an important role in the state. It provides policy advice to the Commissioner and keeps the agency apprised of developments in agriculture throughout the state. The Commission is a statutory body comprised of nine individuals appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Commission is comprised of individuals directly involved in agriculture from four agricultural districts. Each district is represented by one member of the Republican Party and one member of the Democratic Party and one member who is appointed to serve at large. The Commission has historically been made up of representatives from the dairy, beef, horticultural, field crop, potato, and greenhouse/nursery sectors.

Proposal Summary

CDA is proposing to reduce the required representation from each district to one and five members to serve at large.

The CDA organic act was passed in 1949 when Colorado had over 47,600 farms averaging 444 acres, and when Colorado supplied 33 percent of the nation's broom corn used for broom manufacturing.

Today, Colorado has about 17,000 fewer farms, and the average size has grown to over 1,000 acres. Many of Colorado 30,700 farms are "hobby" or "lifestyle" farms where the owner derives most or all of his income from off-farm jobs.

Due to the contraction of the agricultural industry and the changes in the nature of Colorado's farms, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find willing and qualified candidates from both political parties in each of the statutorily-defined agricultural districts. CDA's proposal would require maintaining the current balance of political party representation, but it would give the Governor the flexibility to choose the majority of appointments from throughout the state. Further, by retaining the concept of defined agricultural districts, the commission will continue to have geographic representation as well as partisan balance.